Pine Ridge Diary

Dear Diary,

Today is the first day of spring. Normally this is when flowers bloom and such, but there are few flowers blooming here. Nobody can afford to plant flowers or water a garden - let alone feed their children! There are wild flowers starting to bud around the reservation, and I guess those lift my spirits a little. It is hard to feel too positive when we live in such poverty.

I have heard some talk about people trying to do something about our situation here. I do not know if there is any hope, but it is certainly an idea. I am concerned that Wilson’s goons will crack down hard on anyone who tries to seriously speak out. I wouldn’t want to be one of the first to get hurt.

Dear Diary,

The heat of summer is upon us! When I last wrote I was very concerned about Wilson coming after people who wanted change on the reservation. Well, I have news! Some others have started a group they call the Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Commission. It is clear that Wilson is not in favor of this group, but they are getting more and more vocal all the time. I have helped them a little too - which feels very good! I have helped them gather evidence against Wilson. I hope that they are able to be successful.

Dear Diary,

The harvest season is lovely, even when we are too poor to have a harvest. More and more traditional tribe members are gathering for the harvest, to celebrate the season. I haven’t seen so many people so enthused in our old ways for a long time. As I go around the reservation I hear more and more phrases from our native tongue. I find it so exciting!

Dear Diary,

Being cold and poor is a terrible combination. I am lucky enough to have the little I do have. There are many others who have less and they need help surviving the bitter cold of this season. My neighbor’s children have stopped going to school because they are too cold to leave their house. It is so to watch. Like I said, I am lucky.

Activism has caught those of us involved in the civil rights commission, however. We have more evidence against Wilson than ever, and we even have support from other nations around the country. That kind of support is very humbling and reassuring. It reminds me that we are all part of something bigger and better than ourselves. This hope helps me feel less cold, I think. When the neighbor’s kids are home from school on the coldest days, I huddle with them and share old stories my mother told me of how our people lived before the reservation. They love the stories as much as I did when I was younger.